Murder Dates

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Murder Dates

by Hannigrammatic

Summary

Something wicked is stirring.

Notes

Sorry if this reads awkwardly. Not feeling great but wanted to get it going so badly, might rework it a bit in the future! Mostly happy with it so~

All mistakes are mine!

Note: I am blown away by the kudos and comments from you beautiful people. I know my chapters are rather short and I imagine the story seems rushed often, but I am so happy to be able to share the happy murder times with you all :D Thank you for the smiles and the encouragement ♥♥ I love you all dearly!

Wicked Times

Chapter Summary

Will is invited to a party and later meets Hannibal for a third time.

Chapter Notes

NOTE: Reworked this now that I'm not a zombie. The thing with Abi is still going to happen, so some of you have been spoiled a bit! For which I am sorry xD Rough day but all is well in murder land now!

Sorry about the confusion ♥ I find the chapter reads much more smoothly/less confusing now xD

Breakfast that Saturday morning was spent quietly but comfortably. Abigail was dressed for the day in jeans and a sweatshirt with cute puppies depicted in a cartoon style all over it - Will's choice, and it had fast become her favorite. They both loved animals, but with their tiny apartment and budget and schedules, a dog wasn't something either of them could own. But it was one of those goals families have for the future, one of the things they talked about often with warmth, and today was no different.

"I want a Border Collie," Abi announced after politely swallowing her mouthful of cereal. "A girl, and I'd name her Melly."

"That's a cute name," Will agreed. "I'd like a big mutt. He'd shed all over the place."

"Gross," Abigail giggled, but she smiled at her dad. "You'd be the one cleaning it up, though, so that's okay, I guess."

Will laughed into his spoonful of sugary cereal before clamping his mouth down around the spoon. It always struck him as hilarious that one of the only things he and his daughter differed on was their taste in cereal. Whereas Abigail preferred plain Cheerios or even bran cereal, Will, the father, filled himself with as much sugar as he could, Lucky Charms and Cocoa Puffs and Captain Crunch. Blue eyes twinkling, Will always considered his morning made when Abigail would roll her eyes at his unhealthy habit.

"What would you name him?" his daughter inquired after she'd finished her own *actual* cereal.

“Winston,” Will answered immediately. “Sounds like a name with personality, don’t you think?”

“Eh, I don’t know,” an answering of brighter blue eyes and long lashes fluttering in an innocent blinking. “I think he should have a weird name. Mister Lecter has a weird name.”

And like that, Will found himself discussing Hannibal Lecter with his daughter. He had to congratulate himself for not coughing too hard at the mention of the man’s name, and also for not blushing as his heart skipped a beat as memories bombarded him all at once of the previous evening. Murder and awful champagne, blood flecking onto his glasses and jacket and soaking his clothes as the electric bone saw carved its way into Miss Sterling’s pliant, dead body. And later good wine and talk of murder dates, two hands stroking long fingers against his face and hair, and th-

“Dad, you look like you need to pee,” Abigail’s voice interrupted his thoughts. “Unless you’re just really excited to name a dog after my piano instructor.”

“What?” Will asked breathlessly, and they both laughed at each other, Abigail because her father looked absolutely hilarious just then, spoon halfway to his mouth and hair in his eyes, and Will because his little girl had hit far too close to the mark. “No, I’m just. Uh, it’s the weekend. I’m happy I don’t have to do anything today is all.”

“Can we watch a movie? I want to watch something scary.”

With a nod, Will smacked himself inwardly at how easily he could forget how astute his daughter was. He wondered just how red he had turned at her innocent insinuation, but he brushed it off and finished his breakfast.

They did the dishes together this time, him washing and her drying, and he cast a cursory glance around the kitchen once before they sprawled in the living room to watch a horror movie. He always indulged his daughter in what she wanted, to an extent at least, perhaps even passed that, so he let her watch what she wanted generally. If it seemed too extreme he’d watch it first and make his judgements, but more often than not he let her have her way, knowing she was smart enough to see fiction for what it was. But this one was a slasher, and being able to see the parallels between the suave serial killer on screen and Hannibal Lecter, who had a murder basement -and himself, having murdered and cut bodies into bloodied segments-, gave him pause enough to consider changing a few things around.

Will would do *anything* for Abigail. Had and would continue to be a monster in the shadows, rending flesh and bone to keep this little girl safe and blissfully unaware. But he didn’t want her to see that lifestyle, no matter how much it hurt to lie to her about a warehouse job that didn’t exist.

❀

On Sunday morning Will woke to the smell of breakfast, and he wandered sleepily into the kitchen with a smile already on his face. Abigail was hard at work flitting around, two steaming plates full of food already on the counter, and dirty dishes cooling in the sink. The coffee maker gurgled pleasantly.

“Hi, dad,” Abigail greeted. “I made us bacon and eggs. I figured you’d need a pick-me-up since you didn’t sleep very well again.”

“How did you- I mean, yeah. It’s been a stressful week,” Will sat at the table and buried his face in his hands briefly as his daughter set his plate in front of him. “I’m sorry, Abi. I forget sometimes you’re not a little girl anymore.”

“It’s okay. But for now on don’t look so shocked when I try to take care of you, too,” she piped up with a smirk as the coffee maker beeped, and with a wave of her hand to indicate he stay put, she took care of that for him as well.

Will accepted the mug of coffee gratefully and ate everything on his plate instead of picking at it, and his belly was full of food and love for the young woman sitting across from him as they talked about Mister Lecter’s secretary and her niece. It struck him that he was like any parent in denial, watching their children grow up more every day. Abigail’s thirteenth birthday was in a week from now, and he wondered what she wanted to do this year. Normally they’d get a small cake and just spend the evening together like any other, and he’d let her pick something out that she really wanted, like a new shirt or a book.

The rest of the weekend was spent in much the same fashion, both content to laze around, but before the evening came to a close they always got together to read in the same room or play a board game or laugh about some joke or other. It was something they both craved, nearness and socializing, the latter less so regarding anyone else, but from each other it was a necessity. Will tucked her in each night and kissed her forehead before stumbling into his own bedroom to toss and turn for hours before dipping into sleep himself, thinking about Hannibal Lecter and how painfully much he missed him. He fell into slumber both nights with the man behind his eyelids, hovering there as if waiting to take over his mind the second Will wasn’t going about his day. And when he dreamt of Hannibal, the man wasn’t human; he was an onyx-black demon with white eyes and blood-stained antlers.

But he was so tender and when his arms wrapped around Will they were powerful beyond comprehension, offering warmth and security and promise.

❀

Come Monday, Will was grumpy. He dressed for work, in black slacks and a black button-up shirt with a high collar that he left folded open. His hair was a lost cause immediately so he didn’t bother with it, and he bounced around on one foot as he pulled his socks on, almost sliding on the hardwood floor into splits more than once but thankfully managing to catch himself each time. In the bathroom, Abigail could be heard washing up, so Will wet his face in the kitchen sink as his coffee brewed, sipping the piping hot liquid once it had finished and finally opening his eyes to glare more sufficiently at the world -especially at the digital clock on the microwave, with its obscenely bright numbers and its stupid accompanying AM.

They were both quiet as they left the house twenty minutes later, the start of the week rough on her just as much as him, and he dropped her off at school with a hug and mutual grumbled words and sleepy smiles. As he walked away, he reminded himself to do something a little more special this year, like offer to take her out to the theater or get her that new winter jacket she’d been eyeing that made his head hurt with its pricetag.

When Will arrived at work he was just a bit less liable to bite the nearest human, but his sleep-mussed hair and squinting eyes that was just this side of a glare was enough to deter any unneeded conversation. His boss was off today, Mondays and Wednesdays being his gardening class or something similar (Will had promptly forgotten once he'd been hired, truthfully). All he knew was that when Eldon Stammets was out, there was always so much more Will had to do as the man's workload was shared amongst everyone else; and the library was not a small one, encompassing two storeys and possessing a very comprehensive selection of every genre imaginable.

"Will, my man," a voice shouted almost as soon as he'd made it to the staff room.

Will jumped, just having finished clocking in, and spotted Beverly making her way over to him, eyes narrowed and red lips in a full grin.

"Hi, Bev," he grumbled. "Come to harass me with a newspaper again?"

"Nah, not today!" she looked far more chipper than anyone had a right to in the morning. "Actually, I'm here to officially invite you to my birthday bash, yeah!"

"Oh, uhm, when?" Will had no intention in going, but he liked Beverly enough to politely inquire about it regardless.

"Wednesday night. Now I know that face you're making means you're only pretending to care, but think about it, okay? I'll have lots of goodies and coffee available if you don't want to get drunk. I know you work the next day, but come on. You need to let loose, Willy."

"Please don't ever call me that again," Will groused.

"Only if you promise to consider it," Beverly winked and tossed her head, her long hair flitting around her and her perfume wafting into Will's nose. "Otherwise I'm taking a sharpie to anything that has your name on it. Everyone will be calling you Willy in a matter of hours."

"I promise to think about it."

She bumped him out of the way of the computer with her hip, her long hair flitting around and smacking against his cheek briefly, wafting the faint scent of flowers from her shampoo into his nose. She was just slightly shorter than him, and he could objectively say she was a beautiful woman, but honestly he didn't think about her as much more than a colleague. He'd been thinking it was a mutual thing too, until now, wondering why she'd invite him out when she was smart enough to realize parties were most definitely not his thing. But he would consider it because he was polite, and not because he wasn't suddenly wondering if Hannibal would go to a party with him.

The thought of the proper gentleman at a party that wasn't official or fancier than anything Will could conceive of, well -he smiled brightly as he started his shift.

Hannibal Lecter was a man that probably went to sleep in a robe befitting a king, and he likely rolled out of bed with nary a strand of hair out of place. Will couldn't think of anything

less being the reality, especially considering the man murdered people while wearing a full-body condom to protect his suits. Never mind the fact that he could just wear a shitty ensemble like Will did, but why do that when you have enough money to own a house like Mister Lecter did? He was still thinking about it when he left work to bring Abigail to her lessons, and they arrived at the quaint building, Will ushering his daughter through the door alongside the jingling bell. He froze as he looked up, though, his usual gruff greeting directed at the secretary dying on his lips.

Hannibal Lecter was leaning against the desk instead of the blond woman, partially bent over it as he perused an open ledger, but he was looked up at Will now with a polite smile on his face and a knowing one behind brown eyes.

“Ah, Mister Graham,” Hannibal greeted. “And Miss Abigail.”

“Hi, Mister Lecter,” Abigail chirped.

Will felt his heart begin to race the second he realized who was waiting for them -for him. There was no way this wasn’t completely intentional, as until this very day, Will had not seen Hannibal in the lobby. It was a chore to force himself to shake Hannibal’s hand as if they were strangers, especially after seeing his body bent as it had been. Will’s mind had soared into la-la land immediately as he’d taken in the close-fitting suit, pants accentuating firm muscular legs and a pert backside, and as he met Hannibal’s eyes he knew the man was entirely aware of it. Aware and victorious.

“Mister Lecter,” Will said. “Nice to finally meet you.”

Wicked Intentions

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal explore the tension developing between them.

Chapter Notes

AHHHHHH! This was FUN to write xD

All mistakes are mine~

Hannibal's smile never left his face as their hands dropped away. It was a small, private thing, all of it for Will, who swallowed audibly as he ducked his head to feign shyness. Some of it wasn't required to be a facade, though, but he felt like that was just fine.

"Well now, I confess I never thought we'd meet in person," Hannibal said with a grin. "I trust you got my parcel safely? My secretary found it, as it were."

Another wink as Hannibal lied as smoothly as he smiled, as gracefully as ever. Will understood having to keep pretenses up, but it wasn't a conversation he intended to linger on.

"I did, thank you," Will answered with a nod. "Speaking of which, where is Ms Speck?"

"I've sent her on her break. May I inquire as to why?" Will let his own smile grow imperceptibly as he dug his hands into his pockets.

"She mentioned that her niece might be able to mind Abigail for me," the younger man explained. "I figured I could save a call, but it's fine."

"Ah. Nonsense, you can wait here, if you've no pressing matters to get to, of course."

Hannibal's voice made it obvious that he didn't actually care if there were more pressing matters, only that Will remain here for just a while longer. It was a mutual feeling, honestly, and Will nodded his head and cleared his throat, catching Abigail in a hug as she bumped against his side.

"You may go out back and set up," Hannibal directed his polite gaze to her as he gestured at the door behind the desk. "We're starting something new today, so I hope you are prepared."

“I am, Mister Lecter,” and the young girl curtsied before meandering out back, wide eyes glittering up at Will on her way. “Bye, dad!”

“Bye, Abi, I’ll see you soon,” he waved and watched as she disappeared, and then he looked back at the other man.

The small lobby was comfortable, with six plush chairs set along the wall on one side, a plant tucked into one corner by the entrance, and framed paintings scattered here and there. Will considered plopping into one of the chairs, as his body was tired and sore from being on his feet all day, but had a desire to remain as polite as possible around Hannibal in this kind of atmosphere, bypassing his usual sassy disregard and intending to keep it professional.

“It’s nice to see you,” he said softly, before he could help it, but he didn’t look away and flounder like his body wanted to, didn’t cross his arms nervously, just pressed his glance into Hannibal’s features and went for honesty instead.

“Likewise,” accented voice lowered, Hannibal took a single clicking step forward across the tiled floor.

“I actually had a question to ask,” Will said, mind snapping to earlier this day, when Beverly had ambushed him in the staff room. “It’s going to be weird, and you don’t have to accept. You probably won’t, but I figured I would ask anyway.”

“What is that? You may ask me anything, dear Will.”

And here, Will did feel himself falter. He was feeling foolish for even considering asking Hannibal Lecter to a party where he’d stick out like a sore thumb, and simultaneously distracted as his ears took in the affectionate tone that accompanied the older man’s voice now. He recognized the endearment he’d come to subconsciously crave, the thought of being Hannibal’s ‘dear’ anything making his stomach curl in happy knots.

“Maybe we can meet for coffee,” he said eventually. “And I can ask you then?”

The older man hummed briefly and tilted his head at Will as he came ever nearer. He stopped with his toes nearly touching the younger man’s, casting a glance out onto the street to assure that no one was looking, and reached out to brush errant curls behind Will’s ear. His hand remained cupped at the back of his neck so lightly it almost wasn’t, and he watched the shorter man’s face redden prettily as his body shivered reflexively.

“Or you could ask me now, and we could still meet for coffee,” he suggested as he brought their faces closer.

Will felt his body drawn to the man in front of him, but their location and circumstance was all wrong. How he wanted to bury his fingers into silver blond hair and mess them of their perfection, pull the wide, strong body close and feel its hard muscles flush against his own, and oh, how he wanted to do many things, none of which were deemed appropriate for this cursedly public atmosphere. Again, always again, Will reined himself in, fought the need to be close and closer to Hannibal, ears buzzing with energy as his lower body warmed. *Oh god*, Will thought. *I am not getting a boner right now.*

“I could, but I could also not,” Will’s voice hitched as he spoke.

He ducked out of the hand hot against his neck instead, because yes, he was growing hard. The second Will had walked in here and saw the way Hannibal’s long body curved as he leaned over the desk, all blood had been rushing southwards. It was entirely inappropriate, and not only that, but it was frustrating how easily the man could tear him asunder. Will Graham was a man who prided himself on being able to adapt to a situation, evolve to meet its need. He could go with the flow more fluently than the average person, cunningly smart enough to predict just where it was going before most people did. And he could predict clearly that Hannibal could have him a stuttering mess on the floor right there in the lobby in seconds if he wanted to.

“Coffee, tomorrow. I’ll call a sitter,” and Will cleared his throat before backing up towards the door that would let him out onto the street. “Is Crawford’s okay*?”*

For his part, Hannibal was less frustrated and more proud. This man before him was such a delightful creature, and as much as he did indeed want to bear witness to Will shaking apart before him, now was not the time nor the place. It could be, the older man surmised. He could herd the doe-eyed man into one of the chairs, press him down with one hand and kneel in front of him. Hannibal could do all manner of things at any time and not care for the consequences, so long as Will Graham was quivering under his hand again. But where was the pleasure in taking it all when you could pluck up just a little at a time, savor each and every moment as if it were the last?

Hannibal Lecter was not a man who rushed into anything, and Will Graham was a man who knew from experience that it ruined everything anyway.

“Crawford’s is fine,” Hannibal said liltingly, letting his teeth show in a smile that took over his entire face. “I know the owners.”

“Of course you do,” Will rolled his eyes to the heavens. “Eight-thirty okay?”

“It is indeed. But Will, one thing before you go.”

Will’s hand was on the door, barely pressing it open, when Hannibal closed the distance between them faster than he could blink. One second the man was in front of the desk, staring at him over the tiles as he made his escape, and now he was so close Will blinked and jumped back in shock, smacking into the wall by the door. Hannibal followed effortlessly and grasped both of Will’s arms to pin them on either side of his head with a strength the young man could feel quite clearly now that it was being used on him.

“I would not suggest rolling your eyes at me again,” Hannibal purred into his ear.

And just like that, he was gone. Will’s breath left him in a loud gust as he watched Hannibal’s back as the man sauntered across the lobby. Maroon eyes glittered mischievously before disappearing through the door behind the desk, where Abigail waited patiently to begin her lesson. Time was sluggish and difficult to decipher as he remained there against the wall a bit longer, not even moving his arms from their position on either side of him, imagining that he

could still feel the impression of powerful hands holding him down. Will wondered if his face could even turn red when so much of his blood was now filling his extremities hotly.

When Will finally left *Lecter's Legato*, he nearly ran face-first into Ms Speck as the secretary returned from her break. With no capacity to think, let alone converse, he muttered an apology before storming off down the street with no direction in mind.

❀

That night, Will couldn't pin one thought down long enough to make sense of it, and he gave up eventually, opting instead to join his daughter in the living room as she did her homework before bed. He watched her profile fondly for a time, felt his heart swelling at how fast she was growing up. But it wasn't long before he found himself zoning out again, recalling the way Hannibal's voice had dipped so low against his ear that he had been able to feel it reverberating in his belly. Speed and strength of a great wild cat, the man could so easily incapacitate Will, could just as easily destroy him as well.

Again, Will tried to consider the danger of being this close to a serial killer, but all he could make sense of his garbled thoughts was the fact that he wanted Hannibal close, closer, closest. Physically, mentally, emotionally, in any capacity. Will wanted him here, in his house, right now, sitting in the living room with him and Abigail. He wanted the man to join them at the dinner table and eat crappy food as they laughed about each their respective days. Will wanted and wanted, and each thought was more irrational than the next. And later, when he fell into bed, Will Graham imagined long, elegant fingers stroking down his belly instead of his own, Hannibal's sure hands ducking beneath the waistband of his pajama bottoms.

It was Hannibal's breath hot on his face and not his own as he panted into the dark quiet.

He fell asleep and dreamt that Jorge Corwell and Miss Sterling were having coffee together at a dark place, both of them gushing great gouts of blood endlessly as they held their pinkies up fancily. Standing over them, the waiter held a tray filled with rotting meat, skin black as midnight and eyes as white as pearls. They were talking in low whispers, but they all stopped when Will approached and sat down at the table too, three heads tilting in his direction. Blood soaked his shoes and his legs, cascaded down his own chest, and he realized then that his heart was missing, but all he could do was smile and pick up his own cup of coffee and bring it to his lips.

When Will awoke he was sweating, and he rolled cursing out of bed to stumble into the bathroom to wash his face. One look at the clock on his bedside table had let him know that he was up thirty minutes before his alarm, so he didn't bother climbing back under his blankets despite wanting nothing more than to do just that. He stumbled back into the bathroom and stripped his clothes off, and he stood under the spray of the shower with his eyes closed, having already forgotten the dream, letting warm water soak his hair and skin and coax him into wakefulness. When he was finished and dressed for work, hair patted down successfully and aided by dampness, he was just in time to smack the alarm into silence before it had even finished its first trill.

"Good morning," Abigail greeted him in the hall sleepily with hair askew.

“Good morning, sweetie.”

It wasn’t until later, much later in the day, on break at work, that Will remembered the dream, and how he had looked up into dead white eyes and found his missing heart. It had been impaled on one of the waiter’s antlers, and when he had been caught staring at the organ split through the middle and dripping blood onto the table between the four of them, Will had seen long shark-sharp teeth bared in a very familiar smile. Will shook his head and brushed the dream aside, felt his body thrum with excitement as he waited impatiently for the day to pass, and thought nothing of it again.

At eight-ten he left the house, hugging Abigail goodnight and thanking the babysitter, and at eight-twenty he met Hannibal Lecter outside of *Crawford’s Treats*. The man smiled and held the door open for him, teeth gleaming.

Wicked Touches

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal go on a real date.

Chapter Notes

HONESTLY this entire chapter was just an excuse to write fluff. Teasing fluff. THINGS. I loved writing this one~

All mistakes are mine!

The warm atmosphere of *Crawford's Treats* suited Hannibal more than Will thought it would, and he cast the slightly taller man a smile as they waited in the short line leading up to the register. He felt uncertain on some level, after earlier today when the man had pinned him to a wall, but overall his stomach was clenching with excitement over that and now as well, here with the man in a new place.

"So this is a date, right?" Will asked, digging his hands into the pockets of his coat.

"It is," Hannibal confirmed. "Our first, if I am correct. Officially."

Snickering, Will bumped his shoulder against the other man's briefly, before he moved forward. There was one other person ahead of them, but Will was content to wait. He tried to lasso his brain into not overthinking every single minute thing and just enjoy the evening, but remembering that he was essentially here to ask Hannibal on *another* date just made him nervous all over again.

"Hello, Mister Graham," a deep, friendly voice interrupted his thoughts. "And is that- Well, if it isn't Mister Lecter."

Will snapped his attention to the big man behind the counter, one Jack Crawford. His dark eyes were wide with surprise as they flitted between the two men in line, and the smile on his face was big and genuine. It appeared Hannibal knew the owners quite well, as Jack promptly called out for his wife, who came out from the back in an apron with a gracious greeting. Suddenly out of his element, Will shifted nervously in place at the easy affection that existed between the three, peeking up at Hannibal's wide smile as he greeted Bella Crawford.

"Are you two gentlemen ordering together?" Jack asked.

“We are,” Hannibal nodded and pulled out his wallet. “Though I am handling the bill.”

Jack looked at him silently for a moment before bursting out in laughter. Hannibal eyed him over his opened wallet piercingly before he too began to laugh, and the sound was so free that Will found himself blinking at his date. They ordered finally, Will getting a black coffee with sugar on the side, and Hannibal something fancy, and he did indeed handle the ‘bill’. They took a seat in the corner at a bigger table, and Will made sure his back was to the rest of the store, preferring to have less to focus on so he could well and truly enjoy Hannibal’s presence. All of their meetings had felt rushed, charged with more energy than the amount of time seemed possible of bearing, but that’s how it was between the two men.

“I didn’t realize you were friends with the owners as well as knowing them,” Will mumbled good-humoredly.

“We go far back,” Hannibal said. “I used to have them over for dinner very often, before they opened the shop and became too busy to visit.”

“Poor you,” Will was opening multiple sugar packets at once and upending them into the coffee, but he winked at Hannibal to indicate that he was joking - for his part, Hannibal’s eyes narrowed consideringly at the amount of sweet being added to bitter.

“Would you like some coffee with your sugar, dear Will?” his accented voice dipped low with jest.

The air between them was sluggish but happy. Every uncertainty seemed to have fallen away when Will sat down, and as he stirred the sugar into his coffee, he watched Hannibal quietly again. The man was sitting comfortably, leaning back against the wooden chair with his black jacket undone and the suit beneath peeking out, and his pale hair fell into his eyes as he took a sip of his beverage. He was looking over Will’s shoulder at something, but he was quick to catch the younger man staring regardless.

“I would ask if you ‘like what you see’, but I imagine the question would be redundant,” he purred.

Will felt his face flush, but he didn’t look away. He sipped his coffee and remained silent as he regarded this man who he considered himself to know intimately, but also not at all. They were companions, truly, perhaps even true friends, but he barely knew anything about Hannibal’s life beyond murder and piano lessons. And wasn’t that hilarious?

“Eh, you’re okay, I guess,” Will finally said with another wink.

“‘Okay’,” Hannibal frowned and set his drink down. “I believe I am offended.”

They both shared a laugh, and Will almost choked on his coffee when he felt Hannibal’s leg nudge his own beneath the table. He tried not to let it show on his face, but eventually he caught on that the man across from him was doing it intentionally. His heart swelled with an emotion he couldn’t name, so he just went with it, snuck his leg in between Hannibal’s and left it there, not stroking, just leaning gently shin-to-shin.

“You make my brain fuzzy,” Will admitted. “You just have to look at me.”

“Are you just trying to fatten my ego?” the man’s voice had lowered, and he leaned closer over the table.

Will stared into his brown eyes and felt his heart drop. He knew he had invited Hannibal out to ask him something in particular, in fact he had a few particulars to ask the man, but instead he felt like a teenager on their first ever date. The intimate atmosphere made his hands begin to sweat slightly, and he bit his bottom lip in an attempt to ground himself.

“Am I boring you?” the other man’s voice cut through Will’s thoughts. “Lost to your thoughts again. I admit I grow jealous of your brain more and more.”

“Hey, I just confessed that my brain liked you very much,” Will laughed and shook his head. “But I’m sorry. It’s just- I don’t know. We’re here in a cafe, and it just-”

“Please do not tell me you find it funny,” a long-suffering sigh and a roll of eyes, and Will opened his mouth to deny it, but he closed his jaw with a loud click and leaned forward instead.

“I would not suggest rolling your eyes at me again,” Will purred from across the table, lips splitting into a knowing grin when Hannibal’s eyes blinked and then narrowed with wry amusement.

“Dear Will, I do not mean to offend,” and he set his drink down now. “But I do not think you have the gall to back up that statement. Or would you have me against a wall at this very moment if you could?”

Hannibal smirked as the young man turned beet-red and sat back in his chair. He appreciated Will’s humor more than the other likely knew, loved the irony of the situation -two murderers out for a coffee date. But Hannibal was good at playing this game as well, this on-going back and forth teasing of the tension he could feel like a physical thing any time he was near Will. It hadn’t been quite so powerful at first, but as they continued to spend time together, Hannibal found himself wanting more than to just mold the fledgling killer; he had gone into this with the intention of acquiring a companion in the dark world he inhabited and nothing more. But the second he had seen Will leaving his shop the very first time he and Abigail visited it, Hannibal Lecter had been drawn to the man insurmountably.

And so he found himself on a date with him now, one of Will’s legs slotted between his own and resting there innocently and comfortably. Hannibal was a man that was in full control of his body at all times, but even now he could admit that his skin felt warm, perhaps a bit too tight. In contrast, Will’s cheeks and nose were reddened almost beautifully, his blue eyes were wide and considering as he stared across the table, and, Hannibal noted with pleasure, his body was quivering just a bit. It was barely there, but he could feel it where their bodies touched.

“I would,” Will spoke, voice deeper but miraculously not breaking, and he cleared his throat. “I would have a lot of things.”

“Would you really?”

Will shifted his leg just so, knocked his knee into one of Hannibal’s own, but fought the urge to trail his foot higher and higher. This evening had taken a very sharp turn as he found himself completely overwhelmed once again by Hannibal Lecter’s existence alone. He could tell when he was being teased, but he wasn’t about to let the older man be the only one doing it, even if Hannibal had much better control over his faculties. He walked the fingers of his right hand across the table as he took a sip of his coffee, catching the exact moment Hannibal noticed the movement, before pressing just the tips against the man’s own. They didn’t break eye contact at all, and the silence grew long and tense.

“Yes.”

And Will withdrew his hand and leg, all points that had been touching the other man, opting instead to lean back and cross his arms very loosely over his chest. The intimacy was still there, alive in the way Hannibal’s dark brown eyes narrowed in appreciative appraisal as he raked them up and down the younger man’s form. One player recognized another, as it were. Both content to dance around each other, and both too stubborn to break first, it seemed. Hannibal retrieved his drink and took a long sip as he felt something unfurl within him. Will merely smiled happily.

“I wanted to ask you to come to a party with me,” Will finally got to the point, feeling capable of asking the question now that he’d attained some sense of control. “My coworker invited me to her ‘birthday bash’, so I thought I’d see if you wanted to join me. It’s tomorrow night.”

“I would be delighted to,” Hannibal’s smile was knowing and fond. “Though perhaps you can tell me what a ‘birthday’ bash entails.”

Laughing, Will uncrossed his arms and played with the empty packets of sugar cast around his cup of coffee. They spoke quietly together for a time more, as Will described what Beverly had said when she’d first invited him, and that devolved into them discussing Will’s job, so he explained that he was a librarian. Hannibal pressed for more details, however, and so he found himself describing his role more in depth, and how every Monday and Wednesday his boss was out, which essentially left him in charge, as there were very few workers that would step up to the plate (at least the workload, at any rate.) When an hour and a half had passed, and it looked like Jack and Bella were getting ready to close up, they both stood at the same time. Hannibal held the door open wide for Will, and he cast a wave at the owners before following the younger man outside into the chilly night air.

“Shall I drive you home?”

Will looked up and down the street, and then stepped a bit closer as he fought the reflex to shiver, before shaking his head and saying, “I’m good. I’ll see you tomorrow night?”

“Yes. I have something for you, however, before you go.”

“Oh? What is it? ”

“I’m sorry, dear Will, but I am loathe to spoil the surprise,” a wink and a smirk, and Hannibal stepped forward and enfolded Will into a friendly embrace. “You will receive it in just a moment.”

Warm arms wrapped around him strongly, and Will found his breath hitching slightly, and it took him a moment to return the hug, but when he did it was with matching strength, and the two men clasped each other close as they stood on the empty sidewalk outside *Crawford’s Treats*. Will opened his mouth to say something, but he forgot what entirely when instead of releasing him, Hannibal grasped his chin and drew his head back to kiss him. It was no soft brushing of lips this time, either.

It was a proper kiss, and Will moaned quietly as long fingers carded through the curls of his hair and hot lips stroked against his own. He returned it fervently, gripped the lapels of Hannibal’s jacket for leverage, and pressed his tongue against the seam of full lips with insistence. Hannibal pulled away, however, and they breathed each other’s air as maroon eyes locked onto blue. There was tenderness there between them, and the date came to a close pleasantly.

“Was that my surprise?” Will asked softly.

“It was.”

❀

When Will walked home that night he couldn’t stop smiling, and he decided that even had someone hit him with a car just then, he would still be the happiest man. He fell into bed when he got home, the babysitter dismissed, and he hugged one of his pillows close and slept dreamlessly. Across the city, Hannibal Lecter sat in his dining room with a glass of wine in hand, and he inhaled deeply before savoring a mouthful of it as he considered the events that had just transpired.

Tomorrow would be quite interesting indeed.

Wicked Affairs

Chapter Summary

“We should do this again sometime,” he said teasingly, taking in Hannibal’s bow-shaped lips curved tenderly as they looked at each other.

“So long as you are with me, I will do anything that you desire, dear Will.”

The boys go to Beverly's party. It's not as awful as either of them expected. Well, almost at least.

Chapter Notes

SO MUCH GOOEY FLUFF. UGH. I can't wait to write the smut, not gonna lie...

All mistakes are mine~

NOTE: I just want to thank all of you absolutely lovely people that continue to read and comment, and every single person who read and left kudos ♥♥ I'm so very happy to share this series with everyone ^.^ Even without all of that, it makes me smile that I can entertain anyone for any amount of time~

HUGS FOR YOU ALL ♥

When Will arrived at the party he was buzzing with energy, his expectations for what the night may bring drawing his face into a nervous grin when Hannibal opened the car door for him. He’d let the man pick him up at half-past nine, deliberating for a few moments on whether or not he truly wanted to go. But it was too late, he’d already invited the man, and furthermore he’d paid the babysitter already.

“Does Miss Katz know you’ve brought a date?” Hannibal asked innocently as they approached his colleague’s front door.

“Yeah, I mentioned it to her at work today,” Will smiled up at his aforementioned date, fondly taking in the man.

True to form, he was dressed lavishly in a dark suit, but he’d forgone the hair product, so the flaxen locks remained untamed and mussed upon his head. Will wanted to run his fingers through it forever, so soft it appeared under the streetlamp light. Instead, he dug his hands

into the pockets of his new black coat, which the man had offered him on the ride over with a preening smirk. Truthfully, Will had forgotten that he was still owed new clothing, or more accurately the thought had been replaced by Hannibal entirely. These days there wasn't much else in his mind other than his daughter, but she was a given and always would be.

"You looked rather sullen just now," Hannibal's hand ghosted along the small of Will's back briefly before settling warmly as they walked up the steps to Beverly's squat bachelor pad.

"I'm fine," Will smiled and pushed himself against the other man's side, heart skipping a beat as he felt how perfectly he fit there. "I just don't do parties well."

"And yet you've invited me to one?" maroon eyes narrowed at him as they stopped together, neither of them knocking on the front door, behind which loud music was thumping already.

"I, uh, well-"

"Will, I can't believe you actually came!" the door had opened regardless, and Beverly soared out and threw herself at him, tangling her arms around him briefly before pulling back to take stock of the man next to him. "And wow, hello handsome."

Evidently drunk, the woman giggled and patted Will's face happily before moving away from him, face pink but the farthest from embarrassed as she ushered them in. She was chattering so fast Will had no clue what she was actually saying, and he was still reeling from her practically tackling him at the entrance. He tried to shake the image of Hannibal's sharp gaze from over her shoulder, his nostrils flaring and brows furrowing, but before he could assure the man that he was just as shocked at her actions, they were veritably pushed in and then promptly abandoned. The front room was packed, and it resembled a college party, with bodies thumping to loud music, booze available in high quantities, and noise enough to make one's ears hurt. Will's jaw dropped as he came to realize what a 'birthday bash' truly entailed. As far as he knew, the woman was not that much older than him, and yet here he was content to spend his birthdays eating too-sweet cake from the grocery store and watching silly movies with Abigail curled up against his side giggling.

This, though -this was the definition of every party he had ever avoided his entire life, and he was suddenly grateful that Hannibal had dressed down. They would stick out less, but that wasn't much of a consolation.

"Goodies and coffee?" Hannibal said loudly over the music.

"Uhm," Will responded intelligently.

They moved eventually, Hannibal's hand returning to his back, a warm weight that anchored him in place amongst so many people. Bass shook the room from large speakers set up around an actual DJ booth, nothing fancy really, but it was apparent that Beverly went all out. And it turned out that there *were* goodies at least, once they'd explored a bit, pushing between hot bodies and loud laughter and buzzing conversation. Will found himself in the kitchen sitting on a plush stool by tray upon tray of cookies and pastries and other foods, and bizarrely enough, there was even a chocolate fountain.

“This is not what I expected,” Will admitted as Hannibal took the stool next to him, and while the music thumped audibly still, it wasn’t as loud in here.

“It’s quite alright, dear Will. I believe it’s important to be adventurous once in awhile. Although, I cannot quite say that I’m fond of the music.”

Will laughed as he eyed the mountain of sugar before him. He wondered if proper etiquette was required right now, and if not, how much Hannibal would frown at him if he started shoving brownies into his mouth. The air between them was comfortable, and Will felt himself unwinding far more than he thought he would, especially after Beverly’s greeting (the next time he saw her, it would turn out that she was passed drunk and already far into blitzed by the time he had arrived), and the sheer amount of people she had managed to fit into her puny one-bedroom house. The kitchen was tiny and they were both seated at an island counter that was shorter than the stools, so they ended up leaning awkwardly there, but they were together.

“We could go dance,” Will suggested jokingly. “You might grow fond of it.”

“Doubtful, but if you wished to, I imagine I could be convinced to join you.”

The image of Hannibal Lecter grinding against him while they rocked out to the music was both enticing and also horrifying. Will couldn’t for a second imagine it, so out of character it was. But the more he thought about it, the easier he found himself picturing Hannibal with his jacket undone and his tie pulled out of shape, hair damp with sweat as he moved his body to the undulation of the music, all primal beats and rolling of hips and heated closeness. His face turned red as he pictured maroon eyes heavy-lidded at him in a ‘come hither’ expression, and Will grabbed the nearest cookie and shoved it into his mouth quite resolutely. It was no shock that he promptly began to cough loudly seconds later, and he felt Hannibal’s hand smacking his back soundly to dislodge the mouthful he had taken too quickly.

“Wow,” Will said between coughs.

“Are you quite alright?”

The accented tone was concerned, but when Will finished coughing, he noticed that the man was smirking at him. He nodded wordlessly as he caught his breath, but now he had a smirk to match the imagined steamy version of Hannibal Lecter, so he jumped to his feet and began to raid the boxes of booze set haphazardly around the kitchen, which had become some sort of storage room while the party commenced on the other side of the door. Will had his hand around the nozzles of two beers when said door slammed open and people poured in, all stumbling around in varying stages of drunkenness. He caught Hannibal’s eye over a pretty redhead that began to ask him about his hair and what shampoo he used to attain such bouncy curls, but when he opened his mouth, she moved on anyway, thanking him for the booze as she took both beers from his hands and wandered off.

“We could leave,” Will suggested as he sat back down resignedly, boozeless and not wanting to brave another small crowd, and he waited for the last body to leave the kitchen before continuing. “We could go for a walk or drive out of the city. Or just drive in general.”

“Only drive?” Hannibal asked cheekily and knowingly, but he took mercy on Will’s susceptibility to blush, and said instead. “This is fine. I’m enjoying myself so long as you are here.”

“You haven’t moved from the stool and you keep curling your lip at the brownies,” Will pointed out.

“They look like lumps of coal,” the serial killer deadpanned.

Will laughed loudly and reached for one. It did look like coal indeed, but it pulled apart so easily, and when Will bit into it, it was so sweet and creamy that he quickly devoured the rest of it. Only when he had finished it did he realize that Hannibal had been watching him the entire time, and he blinked.

“Doesn’t taste like coal,” Will announced breathily. “Try it.”

And he picked up another one and brought it to Hannibal’s lips before he could question himself, eyeing the man as he did so. He fought the urge to hide behind his hair, instead tossing his head so his bangs bounced out of the way, and he nudged the treat against full lips, his own mouth opening instinctively when the older man finally relented and allowed Will to feed him.

It was wholly intimate and entirely uncouth, at least to Hannibal’s refined tastes. He had no desire to be here despite his words to the young man blushing up at him, but some things were worth suffering over. It wasn’t the action of the young man that irritated him, and indeed the brownie did taste deceptively good, but the atmosphere was cramped and loud and he felt like he was at every single party he had never been invited to or had the desire to go to, all of them bunched into one. But Will had invited him, had thought of him when his colleague had asked him to come, and so the intention was almost enough to overrule the general distaste he was now feeling. Almost. What really made the evening worth it was the red lips sealing against his own, and despite Will’s habit of easily becoming embarrassed or timid, the kiss was not hesitant. A questing tongue pressed against his teeth and chased the taste of the offending brownie, and Hannibal opened his mouth obligingly as he hooked a leg around the stool that Will sat on to pull him closer.

Clumsily, Will kissed Hannibal open-mouthed and wetly, breath gusting out of his nose as he fought to steady himself. It had been on a whim, courage borne from his desire to be closer and closer to this man. This man who had agreed to come to a party with him, who clearly didn’t want to be there despite his words (Will could tell by the way he still eyed the kitchen as if it had personally insulted him), but who took it all in stride for Will. It was that thought that had spurned him into action, and he would be embarrassed later at how he had launched himself against Hannibal much like Bev had earlier with him, but for now it was enough that his lips were full of damp heat and the taste of chocolate and the older man’s own flavor. When they pulled apart, he looked up at Hannibal’s face with a questioning smile and a coyness he only partly had to fake.

“Not coal,” Hannibal agreed in a whisper.

The smile that lit up Will's face was enough to send Hannibal's heart into a crescendo. It was very brief, but it was there, and he tugged the man's stool as close as he could, wrapped an arm around Will's waist wordlessly and cupped the side of his face with his free hand. How beautiful this small man was. It was true that he wasn't as delicate as most people assumed from a first glance, but they didn't notice the way Will intentionally made himself appear as if he were ever smaller than the situation at hand. Hannibal had noticed it right away, and had he had similarly noticed the way Will didn't shrink around him. For all his bashfulness, it was apparent that the younger man was also very capable of taking what he wanted as well.

Practically sprawled in his lap, Will Graham was still graceful in Hannibal's eyes, and he stroked a thumb affectionately along coarse stubble, tracing the man's jawline in fanciful invisible patterns.

"I feel like I'm falling," Will breathed into Hannibal's mouth.

"You can't. I'm holding you too tightly," Hannibal replied.

Turns out, the party wasn't that much of a failure after all. They didn't stay much longer, especially after at least twenty bodies tried to squeeze into the tiny kitchen seconds before they could resume kissing. A cloud of marijuana smoke wafted in after them, and the resulting munch-fest wasn't something either man wanted to be around for. Will felt almost guilty for having not hung out with Beverly at all, but he let the thought pass when he spotted his colleague wrapped around a blond woman on the couch as they made to escape. Will looked away quickly, but not before noticing tha-

"Was that your secretary?" he asked Hannibal.

"I do believe it was," the man answered. "It would appear Ms Speck and you have a mutual friend."

"Apparently."

And Will laughed as they made it to Hannibal's Bentley and got in. The man didn't start the engine right away though, opting instead to return one of his hands to stroke over Will's face affectionately. As simpering as it was, Will stared into Hannibal's brown eyes and imagined that he felt exactly how people did in fairy tales when they met the individual of their dreams. Or nightmares, Will acknowledged, and he somehow managed not to lose his shit over the thought that he was falling head over heels for a man that killed people and kept their body parts in a huge industrial freezer.

"We should do this again sometime," he said teasingly, taking in Hannibal's bow-shaped lips curved tenderly as they looked at each other.

"So long as you are with me, I will do anything that you desire, dear Will."

"Oh?" Will carded his hand into the older man's hair, finally giving into the urge that had followed him all night, and he tugged the impossibly soft locks between his fingers with a quiet sound of delight.

“Oh yes,” Hannibal whispered against his ear as they leaned across the front seats. “But for now, I shall return you home. I believe you’ve missed your curfew.”

The drive was quiet but it was a silence full of fondness, neither of them feeling the need to break it. Will watched the city passing by with his heart thumping thick with emotion, and when the black car rounded the corner onto his street, he felt his guts tangle. But it wasn’t pleasant, and he frowned heavily as his entire body pulled tense with such a heavy feeling of foreboding that the blood drained from his face. He discerned the cause of it when his apartment came into sight, but by then he was no longer feeling anything at all.

The door to his apartment stood wide open, lights off within, and something dark leaked out over the threshold of the entrance. Will was out of the car before it had rolled to a stop.

Wicked Love

Chapter Summary

Will finds the person responsible for Abigail's disappearance.

Chapter Notes

This was hard to write because essentially not much happened, but also a LOT happened. Hard to explain. There was more describing emotion -which is something I'm HORRIBLE AT-, and less action, and definitely less fluff LOL. But the next part will be JAM-PACKED with it, so~

All mistakes are mine!

THANK YOU ALL FOR READING AND LEAVING KUDOS AND COMMENTS. I seriously love you all ♥

It was hard to breath. It didn't matter how much air Will Graham managed to take in through his gasping mouth, only a thimbleful made it to its mark. His heart was thumping and trying to climb up into his throat.

The growl that left him was animalistic, frightened frustration turning into rage at the end of it as spittle flew from his mouth.

Abigail was gone. Someone had taken his daughter.

He was vaguely aware of Hannibal there at his periphery, but if he were saying anything, Will wasn't hearing it. All he could hear was his own harsh breathing and sounds of distress that he had no control over as he tore into the apartment and checked every room. Nevermind that the babysitter was dead, throat slit sloppily and blood spattered everywhere. Nevermind that he tracked it further into the apartment as he stormed through. He knew his daughter was gone the second he'd seen the door open, but he wasn't able to accept it. Eventually he fell to his knees in Abigail's room, some part of him snapping so completely that his strength left him entirely. There was an ounce of hope as he took in the bedroom, seeing signs of a struggle but no blood.

There was nothing indicating how long she'd been gone, however, and Will ran his hands through his hair frustratedly, fingers pulling harshly as if the pain could focus him, but all he managed to do was smear the sweat beading his face through the dark curls. Attaining any

sense of calm, let alone breathing in and out and not just in and choking, became a challenge as he sat on the floor in his daughter's room, unaware of the consistent whining sound that he was letting out still. *Where is she where is she where is she*, was the unending mantra in his head, a marquee scrolling the words across his brain in fluorescent lettering. It wasn't until he felt the warm pressure of Hannibal's hands on his shoulders that Will managed to become aware of his surroundings again.

"Breathe, Will," Hannibal whispered calmly into one of his ears, but Will couldn't and he didn't know how to tell the man that, and all he could do was shake his head and choke on a sob. "*Will*, focus on me. Focus on my voice. Stay with me."

Will finally let out the breath he'd been struggling with, and it was only because the pain was so sharp in his chest that his body forced it out, kicking into survival mode as he began to systematically shut down. He was dimly aware of the soothing motion of Hannibal's hands massaging his shoulders and neck, of his wide thumbs pressing almost painfully into muscle, and he could feel hot air stirring the hair at the back of his neck as the older man continued to speak in a quietly comforting tone.

"Are you with me?" the man asked. "Keep breathing. That's better. Lean back, Will."

It was easy to listen and let Hannibal guide his body back, easy to lean against a strong chest and let his head fall onto a shoulder that was hard and steady. He felt long fingers stroke along his jawline and down his throat, felt the hand running through his hair despite the sweat dampening the curls, and after a while he did start to consciously breathe in and out. The sound of blood rushing through his ears like an unending tidal wave faded to a tolerable level, and his heart came down to a speed that wasn't making his entire body pulse sporadically.

"Where is she?" Will whispered pathetically.

Hannibal held the smaller man's body against him and it felt as if he were a bird, fragile and fluttering and light. He imagined that he could pick Will up with one arm and carry him around as if he were a single feather dancing frantically in the wind, and for the first time in a very long while, Hannibal Lecter felt his own body responding to the distress that was so tangible as they both sat on the floor together. It echoed the places in his mind he kept locked tightly away, a shadow slipping under the crack at the bottom of a door that filled him with an atrociously familiar ache; he knew what it was like to lose someone that meant everything and anything to a person.

"Are you with me?" Hannibal repeated the question.

"I am," Will answered.

Will's voice was no longer reedy and high-pitched. As if someone had flipped a switch, Will went from one hundred to zero in a heartbeat, and Hannibal barely managed to open his mouth before the younger man was shoving away from him and jumping to his feet. A growling sound replaced his whines, harsh breathing gone hoarse, and Will was bounding out of the room noisily to stomp into his own bedroom. Finally focused, Will shoved his panic aside as he knelt in front of his bed, tore out one of the boxes that fit snug underneath it, and

withdrew a handgun that hid beneath the piles of paper within. He checked the safety before tucking it in the back of his pants, and was standing when Hannibal appeared in the doorway of his room.

“I’m going to find her,” Will announced to the man, staring into maroon eyes with his own stormy ones, wondering if the older man would stop him or help him.

“We are going to find her,” Hannibal corrected.

He watched Will’s face soften minutely, eyes glistening in a moment of affection as he took in Hannibal’s words. Then his features pulled taut and he was careening out of the room and down the hallway without another word or thought.

❀

Abigail woke up with a groan of pain, head pounding painfully, hair a tangled, sweaty mess as she stumbled to her feet and looked around in confusion. She still wore her pajamas, and she shivered despite how warm they usually kept her, but try as she might, she couldn’t tell where she was or why. Her brain felt cloudy, and whatever had led up to this point in time was absent no matter how much she struggled to remember; the last thing she could recall with any certainty was hugging her father goodnight.

The room she was in was tiny, a closet or something similar, and it was so dark that she could barely see her own hands in front of her, but she felt along the wall persistently until her fingers closed around a doorknob. It opened easily, and she would have been surprised if she was capable of making sense of her present situation, but as it was she merely opened the door and tiptoed out. This room was much larger and less darker, security lights dim along the walls, and it took Abigail no time at all to recognize that she was at the library where her father worked. Had he brought her here? And if yes, why? She had a million questions but she was alone, and like anyone lost she sought to be found, and so she continued walking down the hall until she was in a more familiar spot by the public bathrooms.

At this point she heard voices. They were loud and rushed, one unfamiliar but the other-

“*Did you think I wouldn’t find you?*” her father was yelling.

He sounded so angry that Abigail winced and slowed her pace, her immediate instinct to run to her father muted by how incredibly different he sounded; but it was short-lived, and she made her way closer as the unknown voice took on a pleading tone. And then she was rounding the corner into the large, open lobby of the library, the area that lead to the front desk with its ugly stretch of carpeting and its tacky 'no scents is good sense' posters. There she found her father and Mister Stammets facing each other, and in a flash she remembered the balding man shaking her awake and claiming that her father was hurt, and how she ha-

“Abigail,” a soft voice to her right sounded, and she jumped as she found Mister Lecter striding closer with one hand held out. “Take my hand, Abigail. Let’s go for a walk.”

“But dad-” she didn’t take Mister Lecter’s proffered hand despite his familiarity, opting instead to draw closer to her father who had his back to her presently, having neither heard

nor seen her yet.

“Please, Abigail. We must let your father handle this.”

Abigail shook her head and took another step towards the man that she loved more than anything or anyone, who laughed at her jokes and had a smile ready for her no matter how awful his day had been. Her father did everything in his power to keep her happy, bought her nice things even when she knew he couldn’t afford it and sacrificed his own time to see her safely through life. Who was this man now, though?

She thought she should feel afraid but instead she just wanted to understand.

❀

The last hour had passed by in a blur of motion and words and thoughts barely held in check as panic tried to gain control of him. Will kept it at bay only because Hannibal seemed to be there any time he felt himself begin to crack, and after he had picked up the trail of whoever had taken his daughter, it became almost easy to stare ahead and just move. He went with the flow but did not let the flow take control, and he found himself at his very own work place, going merely on gut instinct and the bizarre insistence that he would find everything that he needed to there. And what he found was his boss, Eldon Stammets, the middle-aged man standing in the entrance with a deer-in-the-headlights expression on his blotchy face with glasses askew and eyes wide in genuine shock.

“Where is she?” Will hissed, chest going cold as he noticed the blood staining his boss's white shirt. "Where is my Abigail?"

There was no room for understanding or even an answer. The only thing Will was capable of now was action, as the last hour’s panic and the weight of helplessness and despair thundered down on him in an anger so complete he felt that there must be nothing left within him but that. The gun was a heavy weight at the back of his pants, but he ignored it entirely as he launched himself at Stammets, moving so fast that the man had no time to respond, and they both tumbled to the floor in a mess of wresting limbs and grunts of exertion, each struggling for dominance. It was Will who came out on top, however, younger and more agile, and he wrapped his hands around Stammet’s throat and put all of his weight behind it, stared into bulging eyes and the heaving O of his boss’s mouth as the life was inexorably choked out of him. And even when he went limp Will didn’t stop, lips pulled into a snarl and voice growling out of him as he squeezed and squeezed and jerked against the body under him.

He felt the head-rush as adrenaline hit his bloodstream, heard his heart beating fast and loud and felt as if the organ were in his guts instead, pulsing in time with the twitching movements as he straddled the now dead man that used to be Eldon Stammets. There was no slow demise, no torture to prolong and drive home the fatal mistake his boss had made in taking his daughter, there was nothing but his vision painted red and his body moving of its own accord, and when he finally noticed that there was a corpse beneath him, he merely drew back to pound his fist into an unseeing face.

He didn’t know how long he sat astride the man and beat on his dead body, only knew that his knuckles split with the force of his hits. Will imagined he would have gone on until there

was nothing left to destroy, but it was then that two strong arms wrapped around his torso and pulled him away seemingly effortlessly. He jolted back into awareness when he realized that he could hear Abigail crying for him to *stop, dad, stop, please stop*, and his heart shattered. Will stumbled towards her, terrified that she would run and knowing she had seen everything, and he felt tears prick at his eyes painfully.

But she didn't even blink before she launched herself at him. Small arms wrapped so tight around him that he gasped and fell to his knees. She was there and she was safe and he vowed to never let her out of sight again, and as he embraced her tiny body and held her as close as possible, Will finally allowed himself to cry. Behind him, Hannibal stood over Eldon Stammet's body and looked at the mess of gore that used to be a face, glasses shattered and impaling bruising cheeks. He passively observed Will sobbing against his daughter, briefly meeting Abigail's widened sapphire eyes over her father's shoulder, and then he turned away.

He had a lot to clean up tonight.

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